

National Heritage Areas Alliance Update

ANHA

INTERPRETATION IN HERITAGE AREAS:

Revealing Meaning on a Regional Scale

For many National Heritage Areas, interpretation – making a connection between people and resources through education – is a key activity. Interpretive programs can expand the audience for heritage area activities and open the door to new partnerships and collaboration. When residents and visitors feel a tangible link to a physical place or to a cultural legacy, they are often more willing to participate in its conservation.

As nationally important landscapes, heritage areas have a unique set of resources – natural, cultural, recreational and scenic – to draw upon when providing public interpretation. Yet, National Heritage Areas also face special challenges in the interpretive arena because the stories they tell are regional in scale and include such a diverse array of themes and sites. Yet, these obstacles are also often the key to success in that surmounting them necessitates large amounts of public input, the construction of a broad-based partner network and the completion of a substantive research agenda, including the use of archives, oral history and archaeology.

Across the country, National Heritage Areas are pursuing an impressive number of interpretive projects and initiatives. In the Shenandoah Valley National Battlefields Historic District, for example, action is already underway to complete a heritage area wide interpretive plan (January 2008), which will link together the themes and stories of the Valley in an effort to deepen the Civil War experience for visitors and residents alike. In the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, heritage area staff worked to broaden the interpretive scope of their website, www.delawareandlehigh.org, with sections focused on key themes such as anthracite coal, immigration and transportation. Augusta Canal National Heritage Area operates an interpretive center in former textile mill, where students can experience what life was like in the late 19th century through exhibits and interactive displays. And, in the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor, staff people are trained to provide an internationally recognized interpretation certification program to their peers in the heritage areas' movement.

The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA), the Heritage Development Institute (HDI) and the National Park Service (NPS) are also working together to provide more comprehensive training in interpretive techniques, with an emphasis on how they apply to regional landscapes. In August, a workshop was held in Baltimore that focused on issues in interpretation such as defining a target audience, developing interpretive themes and making interpretation relevant. In the future, more trainings will hopefully be held, which address similar topics. For more information on interpretation and education resources already available, <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/HDI/toolbox.htm>.



above: Delaware and Lehigh NHC webpage



left: Exhibit at Augusta Canal NHA interpretive center



"HDI Workshop"

Legislative Update

Introduced on September 26

S. 2098 (Dorgan, D-ND) A bill to establish the Northern Plains Heritage Area in the State of North Dakota

Introduced on October 27

S. 2180 (Bingaman, D-NM) A bill to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior, the Forest Service, and the Department of Energy, and to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

Introduced on November 1

S. 2254 (Cochran, R-MS) A bill to establish the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes

Passed the House on October 25

HR 1483 (Regula, R-OH) To amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to extend the authorization for certain national heritage areas, and for other purposes (see below)

H.R. 1483 contained the following provisions related to Heritage Areas:

- Extend the authorization for nine existing national heritage areas from \$10 million to \$15 million.
- Establish six new national heritage areas
- Authorize a study for one potential national heritage area
- Make technical corrections to five existing national heritage areas

News from the Heritage Areas



Commissioners Named for Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar recently announced the selection of the first commissioners for the Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. The corridor celebrates the contributions to American culture and history made by Africans and African-Americans from the Gullah and Geechee communities along the Atlantic coast from Jacksonville, FL to Wilmington, NC. The commission will manage the area in partnership with the National Park Service and the state historic preservation offices of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The commission consists of fifteen members; five cultural resource experts and 10 state representatives.

National Aviation Heritage Area Celebrates From the Wright Brothers to Sputnik

The National Aviation Heritage Area (NAHA) celebrated the 102nd anniversary of the Wright

Service and the Aviation Heritage Foundation, Inc. hosted nearly 750 students, parents, and teachers for a day of hands-on activities related to the principles of flight. The highlight of the day was the flight of a replica of the Wright's 1905 Flyer at Huffman Prairie. Pilot Mark Dusenberry flew the full length of the field but experienced a hard landing - just like the Wrights did over a hundred years ago. A crowd of 2,500 people witnessed the event, which brought home the difficulties faced by the Wright brothers. For more information visit, <http://visitnaha.com>.

Great Basin National Heritage Route Seeks Executive Director

The Great Basin National Heritage Route, www.greatbasinheritage.org has begun a job search for an executive director. The newly designated heritage area received an appropriation from the



Nevada legislature for seed money to set up an office and hire for the position. The Heritage Route has contracted with the Great Basin Institute to conduct the job search and provide non-profit training for the director. Anyone interested in the full job description and applying for this position should contact: Great Basin National Heritage Route, c/o Jerry Keir - Great Basin Institute, Mail Drop 0099, University of Nevada Reno, Reno, NV 89557-0099, 775 784 1231 or keir@unr.edu.

New Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (HRVNHA) Communities

During the annual HRVNHA Board Meeting, resolutions passed acknowledging the participation of three new communities in the National Heritage Area Program. The Towns of East Greenbush and Sand Lake in Rensselaer County and the Town of Gallatin in Columbia County all passed municipal resolutions to be included in the NHA. When the HRVNHA legislation was passed in 1996, it included a provision that the communities within the boundaries of what was then the 22nd Congressional district could choose to be involved. These three communities fall within that area, and have now elected to be incorporated.



Oral History and Photojournalism Grant Awarded to Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area (ROSNHA)

ROSNHA was awarded a \$24,000 grant from the Allegheny Regional Asset District to develop an oral history and photojournalism project, "Seeing Pittsburgh." The initiative will bring together diverse student photojournalists and adults to explore the uniqueness of neighborhoods within Rivers of Steel. The project will culminate in an exhibition at the National Heritage Area's Visitor Center, The Bost Building. Accompanying the exhibit will be a catalogue, video podcasts, cell phone tours and classroom tools. The project is part of the Renaissance Grants program, which showcases the work of southwestern Pennsylvania organizations on specific projects of value to them and the community. In this inaugural cycle, applicants were asked to collaborate with students of any age and create projects in honor of the region's 250th birthday with the theme "Imagine What You Can Do Here."

Rivers of Steel was also recently featured in a New York Times article on Pittsburgh. The piece highlighted sites in the town of Homestead including the 1892 Bost Building - which served as strike headquarters during the Battle of Homestead labor struggle and today houses the heritage area's main offices. Visit <http://travel.nytimes.com/2007/10/21/travel/21footsteps.html?pagewanted=1&ref=travel> to see the entire article.

Wayside Exhibit Workshop Assists Erie Canalway Partners

In October, communities located within Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor were invited to take advantage of the expertise of National Park Service staff from the Harpers Ferry Center (HPC) at a one day workshop on developing outdoor interpretive panels, also known as waysides. Taught by Designer Betsy Ehrlich of HPC, with Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Historian Duncan Hay, the workshop covered topics ranging from project startup to interpretive writing to fabrication and maintenance. Over 60 people attended, including project managers, designers, writers, researchers, regulators, and representatives from several communities that received grant funding from Erie Canalway NHC in 2007 to produce interpretive signs.

Organizers were able to draw upon the Silos and Smokestacks NHA Wayside Companion as a template for Erie Canalway. Many thanks to Sue Pridemore of the Midwest Regional Office, Barbara Nelson-Jameson of RTCA Michigan Office, and Betsy Ehrlich for writing the document.



Photo by Greg Grizzell

brother's most successful flight at Huffman Prairie in Dayton, Ohio on Oct 5th, 2007 in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the launch of Sputnik. As part of the two- event, NAHA and its partners hosted Yevgeny Zvedre, Senior Counselor for Science and Technology at the Embassy of the Russian Federation. In addition to a tour of several sites within NAHA, Counselor Zvedre participated in a technical conference and was keynote speaker for a gala dinner at Carillon Park, which houses Wright Flyer III, the airplane flown by the Wrights at Huffman Prairie in 1905.

On Friday, October 5th the National Park

Conferences, Workshops and Events

Heritage Area Leaders Attend French Conference, Sign Memorandum of Understanding

In October, representatives of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA), including Alliance President Dayton Sherrouse, traveled to France to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation de Parcs Naturels Regionaux (French Regional Nature Parks). The signing ceremony was held at the Abbaye de Fontevraud, a historic site in the Loire Valley - itself a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Heritage Area leaders also participated in an international conference, marking the 40th anniversary of the regional nature park model. French regional nature parks share many similarities with National Heritage Areas, in particular a commitment to improving regional quality of life through the protection of nationally significant landscapes and cultural traditions. For more than two years, the Federation and the Alliance have been engaged in a dynamic dialogue, aimed at creating a partnership between the two organizations.

9th Annual Cultural & Heritage Tourism Alliance Conference

The Cultural and Heritage Tourism Alliance will hold its annual conference from November 28-December 1 in Seattle,

Washington. The event includes pre-conference workshops, excursions to sites in the Seattle area and a keynote address

focused on "The State of America's Reputation in the World and How It Affects Tourism" given by Cari Guittard, executive director, Business for Diplomatic Action (BDA). For more information, visit <http://chtalliance.com>.

Partners Column

A Fond Farewell



It is with great regret that we announce the departure of Brenda Barrett, National Coordinator for Heritage Areas at the National Park Service since 2001. On November 5th, Brenda assumed a new position as Director of the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation in the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Bureau provides leadership in conserving open space and offering financial support and technical assistance for greenways, parks, trails and heritage areas in the commonwealth.

During her tenure as National Coordinator, Brenda provided key budget, legislative and policy support to the heritage areas program. She played an important role in the publication of "Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas," a report commissioned by the National Park Service Advisory Board (www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/NHAreport.pdf). In addition, Brenda was also instrumental in forging international relationships with heritage preservation programs in other countries.

Brenda Barrett's new email address is brebarrett@state.pa.us. Her phone number is 717.783.2659. Her address is Bureau of Conservation and Recreation, Rachel Carson Office Building, PO Box 8475, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8475.

National Park Service's Heritage Education Programs Explore Historic Places in Heritage Areas

The National Park Service's (NPS) Heritage Education Services office provides ways for Heritage Areas to connect to visitors and students through Discover Our Shared Heritage travel itineraries and Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) lesson plans, both featuring sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Since the mid-1990s, the NPS, in collaboration with state, local, and private organizations, has developed a series of 45 online travel itineraries. They help the public plan trips by providing self-guided tours of National Register sites, contextual essays, tourist information, maps, and links to related websites. Over a dozen of the itineraries include destinations in National Heritage Areas, including the latest itinerary, Augusta, Georgia. TwHP lesson plans use history, geography, civics, and other subjects to connect students to historic sites listed in the National Register. Of the 135 lesson plans now available online, 26 feature historic places in 17 Heritage Areas, including "Bryce Canyon National Park: Hoodoos Cast Their Spell" in Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area and "Harry Truman and Independence, Missouri: 'This is Where I Belong'" in Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area. The lessons are keyed to national history and social studies standards to ensure their relevance.

The NPS provides technical assistance to those interested in creating a travel itinerary or a TwHP lesson plan. The program websites provide information and completed itineraries and lesson plans. To explore the Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary Series visit <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/index.htm> or contact Carol Shull, Chief, Heritage Education Services, 202-354-2234, Carol_Shull@nps.gov. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/> to access the TwHP lesson plans or contact Beth Boland, Historian, Heritage Education Services, 202-354-2238, Beth_Boland@nps.gov.

For more information on heritage areas, please visit our websites.

The Alliance Update is a partnership project of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and the National Park Service National Heritage Areas Program.

Send your heritage area events and news to the editor by the 18th of the month for inclusion in the following month's bulletin.

Please forward this bulletin to others who may be interested, and encourage them to join our e-bulletin address list.

- Reach the editor at Eleanor_Mahoney@contractor.nps.gov
- To subscribe or unsubscribe, send an email to the editor.

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Publications and Resources

New interpretation and education links on National Heritage Areas website

The National Heritage Areas office of the National Park Service is currently expanding the selection of interpretation and education related resources on its website. Additional links have already been added, with still more to come. Visit the site at

<http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas> to learn more. If you have suggestions of projects or programs to add, please contact

Eleanor_Mahoney@contractor.nps.gov.

Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands and the National Park Service offer online courses in Interpretation

The Eppley Institute Training site is dedicated to meeting the needs of recreation, park, and tourism professionals. A wide range of interpretation courses are offered, including free online introductory sessions. Visit <http://www.interptraining.org/> to learn more.

Assistance

Apply now for "Teaching American History Grants" from the U.S. Department of Education. The deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply is November 9, while the deadline to apply is December 10. "Teaching American History Grants" are competitive awards given to local education agencies, who partner with an educational nonprofit and/or history-based organization.

For more information, visit

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/teachinghistory/index.html>.

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, established in 2000, stretches 524 miles across the heart of upstate New York. It encompasses 234 diverse communities connected by a waterway, who work together to protect this treasured



cultural and historic resource and to promote the Erie Canal system as a recreation destination for today's visitors.

Opened in 1825, the Erie Canal, which connects Buffalo on Lake Erie to Albany on the Hudson River, brought opportunity and prosperity to a young nation. Upstate New York's largest population centers—Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and the state capital Albany—all grew up along the canal

and are within the Canalway Corridor today.

The Erie Canal and a system of connecting waterways populated New York from border to border and generated wealth for the state and the nation. It took bold leadership combined with sweat and muscle to dig the original Erie Canal through fields, forests, rocky cliffs, and swamps. The canal crossed rivers on aqueducts, and overcame hills with 83 lift locks. It sped the transport of goods and people across the state, opening up new markets for mid-western products and spurring New York City to become the nation's busiest port. Equally important, the canal brought a flow of people and new ideas. Social reform movements, like abolitionism and women's suffrage, thrived in the canal corridor. Newcomers infused the nation with different languages, customs, practices, and religions.

Today's residents and visitors can still traverse the state via New York's canal system. Yet, the Erie's original selling point—speed—has been replaced with the opposite appeal: the chance to slow down. The Erie Canalway offers visitors opportunities to explore New York's many historic, scenic, and natural treasures, poke through downtowns, shop at farmer's markets and tour vineyards, and encounter genuine hospitality among the Corridor's diverse canal communities.



Bridging Past, Present, and Future

Reinforcing the Canalway Corridor's distinctive sense of place and building awareness and understanding of its national significance are among the top management priorities for Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor's 27 member federal commission and staff. Like its forebears in the 1800s, the Commission, canal communities, and organizational partners are combining vision, ingenuity, and hard work to achieve their aims.

Recent successes include hosting a 1,000-mile Grand Canal Journey of a replica 1862 canal schooner, Lois

ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL
HERITAGE CORRIDOR



McClure, which visited 28 cities and towns and attracted more than 30,000 visitors. The Commission has leveraged \$12.3 million to fund a variety of projects and its grants program is helping canal communities to build upon their strengths. Among projects funded are interpretive signs, waterfront revitalization, trails, events, and Web-based resources.

In addition, the Commission is forging connections among communities to facilitate the flow of ideas, share successes, and solve common problems. It has co-hosted numerous workshops and conferences, and is building a new website to connect historic, cultural, and recreational resources within

the larger framework of the Canalway Corridor. By reconnecting to a shared heritage, the Corridor seeks to enhance and celebrate the Erie Canalway for all to use and enjoy.

For more information, visit: <http://www.eriecanalway.org>